



US Army Corps
Of Engineers
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: May 12, 2005
Comment Deadline: June 11, 2005
Corps Action ID #: 200310248

All interested parties are hereby advised that the Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for work within jurisdictional waters of the United States. Specific plans and location information are described below and shown on the attached plans. This Public Notice and all attached plans are also available on the Wilmington District Web Site at www.saw.usace.army.mil/wetlands.

Applicant: Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D.
Environmental Management Director, PDEA
N.C. Department of Transportation
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

Authority

The Corps will evaluate this application and decide whether to issue, conditionally issue, or deny the proposed work pursuant to applicable procedures of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments on the proposed alternatives to construct the proposed NC 43 connector from NC 55 to US 17, Craven County submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on April 13, 2005 that will lead to the identification of the least environmentally damaging practical alternative (LEDPA).

Location

The proposed project is located west of New Bern in Craven County, North Carolina at approximately 35.1072° N, 77.1344° W. The proposed project is located within the Neuse River Basin (USGS Hydrologic Unit 03020204, DWQ Subbasins 03-04-08, 03-04-10, and 03-04-11).

Existing Site Conditions

The project study area is located just west of the City of New Bern and is roughly bound by NC 43 and NC 55 on the north, Glenburnie Road on the east, US 17 on the south, and the proposed US 17 Bypass on the west. The project study area encompasses approximately 12 square miles. Overall, approximately 60% of the project study area is undeveloped.

The majority of the undeveloped portion of the project study area is owned by Weyerhaeuser and Champion International and is currently in use as managed pinelands, which are periodically harvested for silviculture. Much of this undeveloped land is also used for hunting. The

Greenbrier community is located in the eastern portion of the project study area. Additional residential properties are located on the southern edge of the project study area along US 17. The northern portion of the project study area is a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses along NC 55 and NC 43 with undeveloped properties along US 70 northward to NC 55. An operational aggregate quarry is located in the northwest corner of the project study area.

Water service is currently supplied to the Greenbrier community and to properties along NC 55, NC 43, Glenburnie Road, and US 17. Sewer service is available in Greenbrier and along NC 55, NC 43, Glenburnie Road, and US 17, although sewer lines on US 17 do not extend as far west as the water lines along US 17.

Based on the Craven County soil survey, soils in the project study area have been characterized as hydric. A majority of the project study area is designated as wetlands, according to National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and Division of Coastal Management (DCM) wetland mapping. Wetland impacts presented below are based on field wetland delineations.

Applicant's Stated Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to promote economic development in the project study area. In addition, north of US 70 the purpose of the project is to reduce truck traffic on Glenburnie Road between NC 43/55 and US 70.

Project Description

The following description of work is taken from data provided by the applicant. The proposed project will place fill impacting jurisdictional wetlands to construct the proposed NC 43 connector from NC 55 to US 17, Craven County. This project will be a four-lane, median-divided facility, partial control of access on new location. The proposed right-of-way width is approximately 220 feet for the proposed project. The proposed facility has a design speed of 60 miles per hour. The total project length ranges from 4.4 to 4.6 miles.

Project Alternatives

The EA describes the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the proposed alternatives for this project. According to the EA, six alternatives to extend NC 43 are currently under consideration as described below:

Alternative D. From the northern terminus, Alternative D turns southwest to a proposed grade separation over the NCRRT tracks. Approximately one mile south of the railroad, an interchange is proposed with US 70. South of the interchange, this alternative roughly parallels the residential development boundary and bears southeast towards US 17. Alternative D continues south between two existing neighborhoods near US 17, terminating at a new intersection with US 17.

Alternative D.1. This alternative is identical to Alternative D with the exception of the optional northern terminus.

Alternative E. From the northern terminus, Alternative E turns southwest to a proposed grade separation over the NCRRT tracks. Approximately one mile south of the railroad, an interchange is proposed with US 70. Alternative E shares a common alignment with Alternatives F and F.1 to about one mile south of US 70 where it diverges to the west. Alternative E terminates at a new intersection with US 17 approximately 0.3 miles west of Trent Creek Road.

Alternative E.1. This alternative is identical to Alternative E with the exception of the optional northern terminus.

Alternative F. From the northern terminus, Alternative F turns southwest to a proposed grade separation over the NCRRT tracks. Approximately one mile south of the railroad, an interchange is proposed with US 70. The interchange is located west of Alternative D and parallels an existing powerline easement. South of US 70, this alternative continues to parallel the powerline easement before curving to the east. The southern portion of this alternative would connect to existing Trent Creek Road and terminate at US 17

Alternative F.1. This alternative is identical to Alternative F with the exception of the optional northern terminus.

A map showing the location of the six proposed Alternatives D, D.1, E, E.1, F, F.1 for this project is included with this public notice. The EA provides the wetland impacts associated with each alternative. There are no stream crossings associated with the proposed project. The wetland impacts for the proposed alternatives are provided below.

Other Required Authorizations

This notice and all applicable application materials are being forwarded to the appropriate State agencies for review. The Corps will generally not make a final permit decision until the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) issues, denies, or waives State certification required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (PL 92-500). The receipt of the application and this public notice in the NCDWQ Central Office in Raleigh serves as application to the NCDWQ for certification. Additional information regarding the Clean Water Act certification may be reviewed at the NCDWQ Central Office, Transportation Permitting Unit, 2321 Crabtree Boulevard, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-2260. All persons desiring to make comments regarding the application for certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act should do so in writing delivered to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), 1650 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1650 Attention: Mr. John Hennessy.

The applicant has not provided to the Corps, a certification statement that his/her proposed activity complies with and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved North Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program. Pursuant to 33 CFR 325.2(b)(2), the Corps can not issue a permit for the proposed work until the applicant submits such a certification to the Corps and the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NCDCM), and the NCDCM notifies the Corps that it concurs with the applicant's consistency certification.

Table 1. Wetland Impacts (Acres)

Site No.	Plant Community	Soil Series	NWI Wetland Classification	DEM Rating	Total Area of Wetland (ac)	IMPACTS PER ALTERNATIVE (Based on construction limits)					
						D	D.1	E	E.1	F	F.1
1	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01A	36	2.97	1.87	0.01	1.87	0.01	1.87	0.01
2	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Leaf/Bayboro	PF01C	36	1.65	---	---	---	---	---	---
3	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01A	36	0.07	---	---	---	---	---	---
4	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01A	36	2.11	---	---	---	---	---	---
5	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01A	36	0.82	---	---	---	---	---	---
6	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Leaf	---	36	0.15	---	---	---	---	---	---
7	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Leaf	---	36	0.17	---	---	---	---	---	---
8	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf/Bayboro	PF01C	40	3.14	---	---	---	---	---	---
9	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Leaf	---	28	0.20	---	---	---	---	---	---
10	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf	---	28	0.14	---	---	---	---	---	---
11	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Leaf	---	24	0.24	---	---	---	---	---	---
12	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf	PF01C	40	0.47	---	---	---	---	---	---
13	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01C	40	0.74	---	---	---	---	---	---
14	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01C	40	0.18	---	---	---	---	---	---
15	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01C	40	0.38	---	---	---	---	---	---
16	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf/Bayboro	PF01C	40	1.62	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27
17	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf	PF01C	40	0.65	---	---	---	---	---	---
18	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Pantego	PF01/4A	27	0.96	---	---	---	---	---	---
19	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF06F, PF01/4A, PF01/4C	40	24.96	---	---	---	---	---	---
20	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01/4A	27	0.06	---	---	---	---	---	---
21	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF06F	40	0.90	---	---	---	---	---	---
22	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01C, PF06F	40	1.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
23	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF01C	36	1.18	---	---	---	---	---	---
24	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Bayboro mucky loam	PF06F	40	1.82	---	---	---	---	---	---
25	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Leaf	PF06F	40	0.53	---	---	---	---	---	---
26	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Pantego / Croatan	PF06F	36	1.98	---	---	---	---	---	---
27	Wet Pine Flatwood/Pocosin	Torhunta	PSS7Bd	40	12.83	---	---	---	---	---	---
28	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Torhunta	PF01C	32	0.68	---	---	---	---	---	---
29	Cleared / Disturbed	Torhunta	PFO4/1A, PF01/4A	15	1.71	---	---	---	---	---	---
30	Headwater Swamp, Wet Pine Flatwood/Pocosin	Pantego / Croatan	PF04A, PF01/4A	44	78.72	---	---	---	---	---	---
31	Headwater Swamp	Torhunta	PF01C	47	4.71	---	---	---	---	---	---
32	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Torhunta	PEM1F, PUMBH	36	1.26	---	---	---	---	---	---
33	Nonriverine Swamp Forest	Masontown / Muckalee	PF01/4A	40	1.99	---	---	---	---	---	---
34	Small Stream Swamp Forest	Masontown / Muckalee	PF01C	69	5.09	0.51	0.51	---	---	---	---
35	Cleared/disturbed	Rains with Lynchburg incl.	PF04A	26	9.64	---	---	---	---	---	---
36	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Torhunta	PF01/4A, PF04A	40	11.44	---	---	0.95	0.95	0.44	0.44
37	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Torhunta	PF01/4A, PF04A	36	6.34	---	---	---	---	1.73	1.73
38	Nonriverine Hardwood Forest	Rains	PF04A	38	0.76	---	---	0.01	0.01	---	---
TOTALS					184.26	2.66	0.80	3.10	1.24	4.31	2.45

NOTES: Construction limits are defined as slope stake boundaries plus an additional 10 feet. Wetland impacts are based on field wetland delineations. The proposed right-of-way width is approximately 220 feet for all alternatives.

Essential Fish Habitat

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Corps' initial determination is that the proposed project will not adversely impact EFH or associated fisheries managed by the South Atlantic or Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Cultural Resources

The Corps has consulted the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places and is not aware that any registered properties, or properties listed as being eligible for inclusion therein are located within the project area or will be affected by the proposed work. Presently, unknown archeological, scientific, prehistoric, or historical data may be located within the project area and/or could be affected by the proposed work.

Endangered Species

The Corps has reviewed the project area, examined all information provided by the applicant and consulted the latest North Carolina Natural Heritage Database. Based on available information, the Corps has determined pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, that the proposed project will have no effect on the following federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat: West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Sensitive jointvetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*).

Evaluation

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values (in accordance with Executive Order 11988), land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, the evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines.

Commenting Information

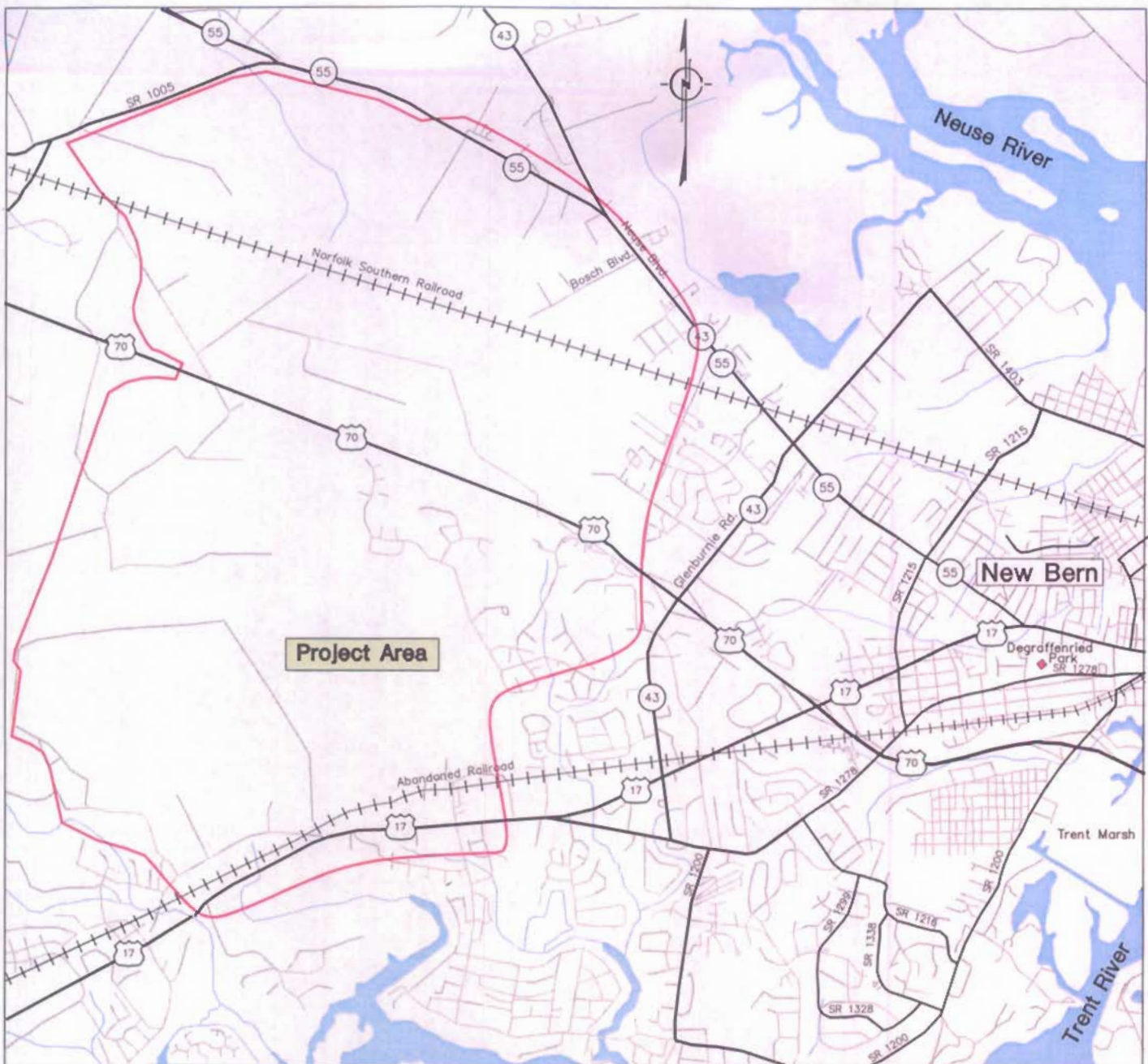
The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity.

Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing shall be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.

Written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, will be received by the Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, until 5pm, June 11, 2005. Comments should be submitted to:

Bill Biddlecombe
Wilmington District
Corps of Engineers
107 Union Drive, Suite 202,
Washington, NC 27889.








Craven County

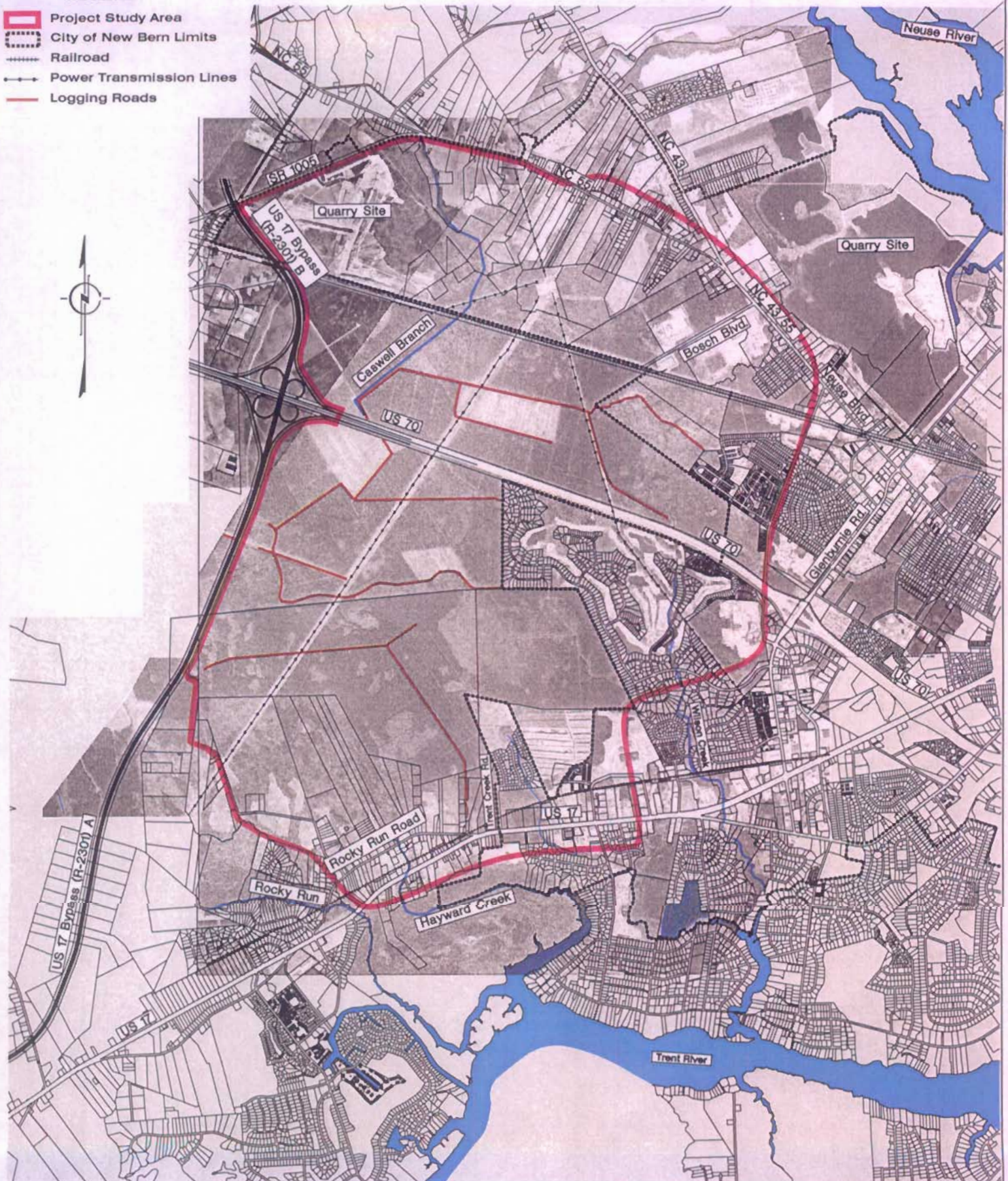


NC 43 Connector **NC 55 to US 17 - TIP No. R-4463** **Craven County, North Carolina**

Project Location
NTS
Exhibit 1.2.1

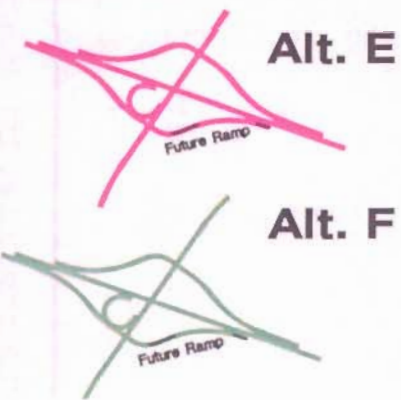
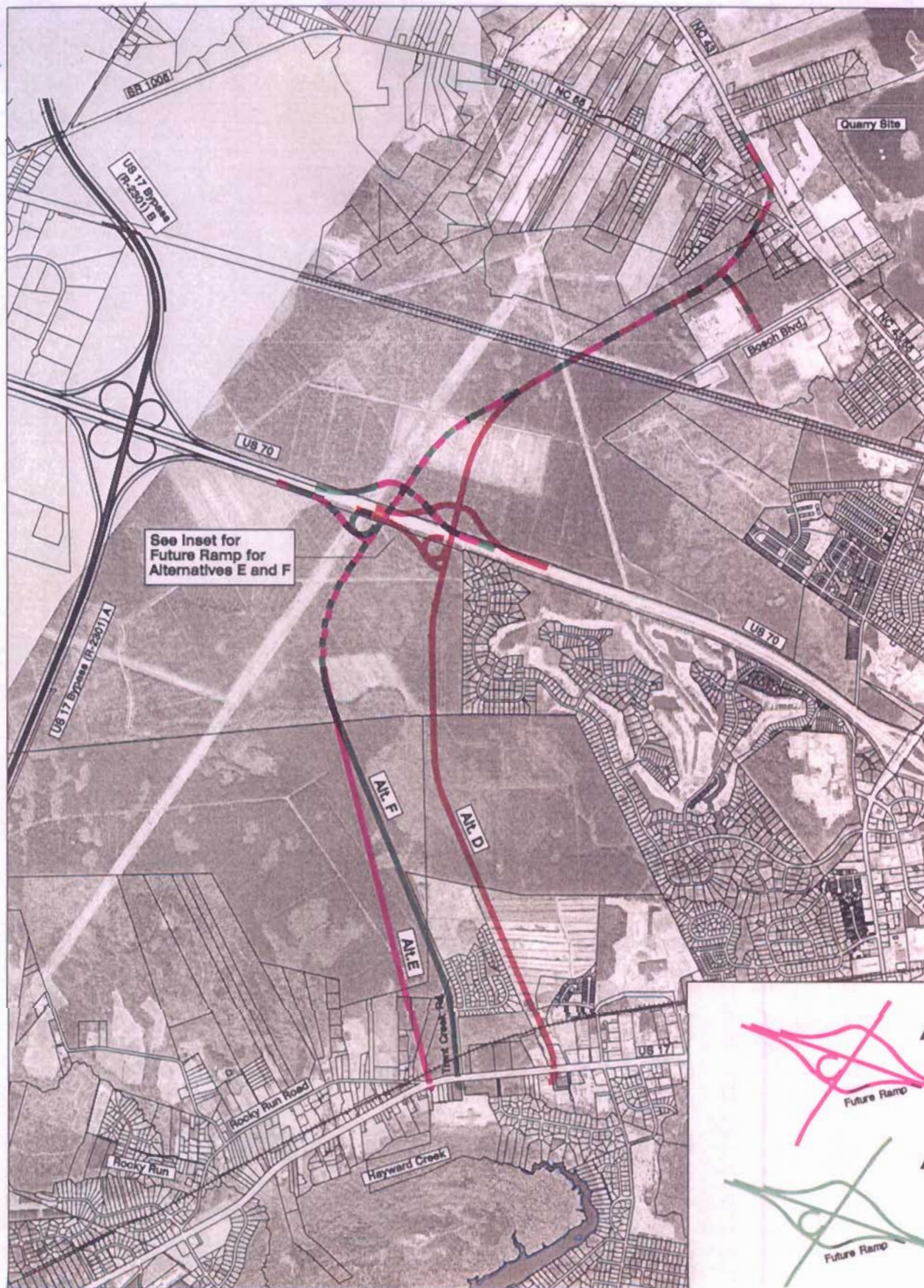
LEGEND

-  Project Study Area
-  City of New Bern Limits
-  Railroad
-  Power Transmission Lines
-  Logging Roads



NC 43 Connector
 NC 55 to US 17 - TIP No. R-4463
 Craven County, North Carolina

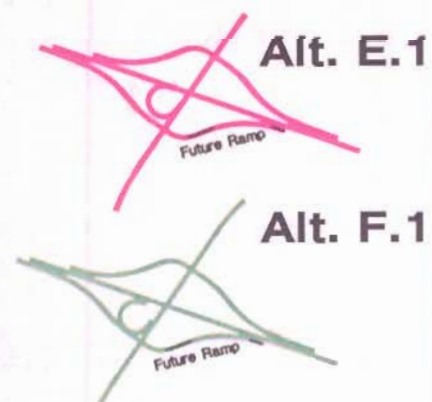
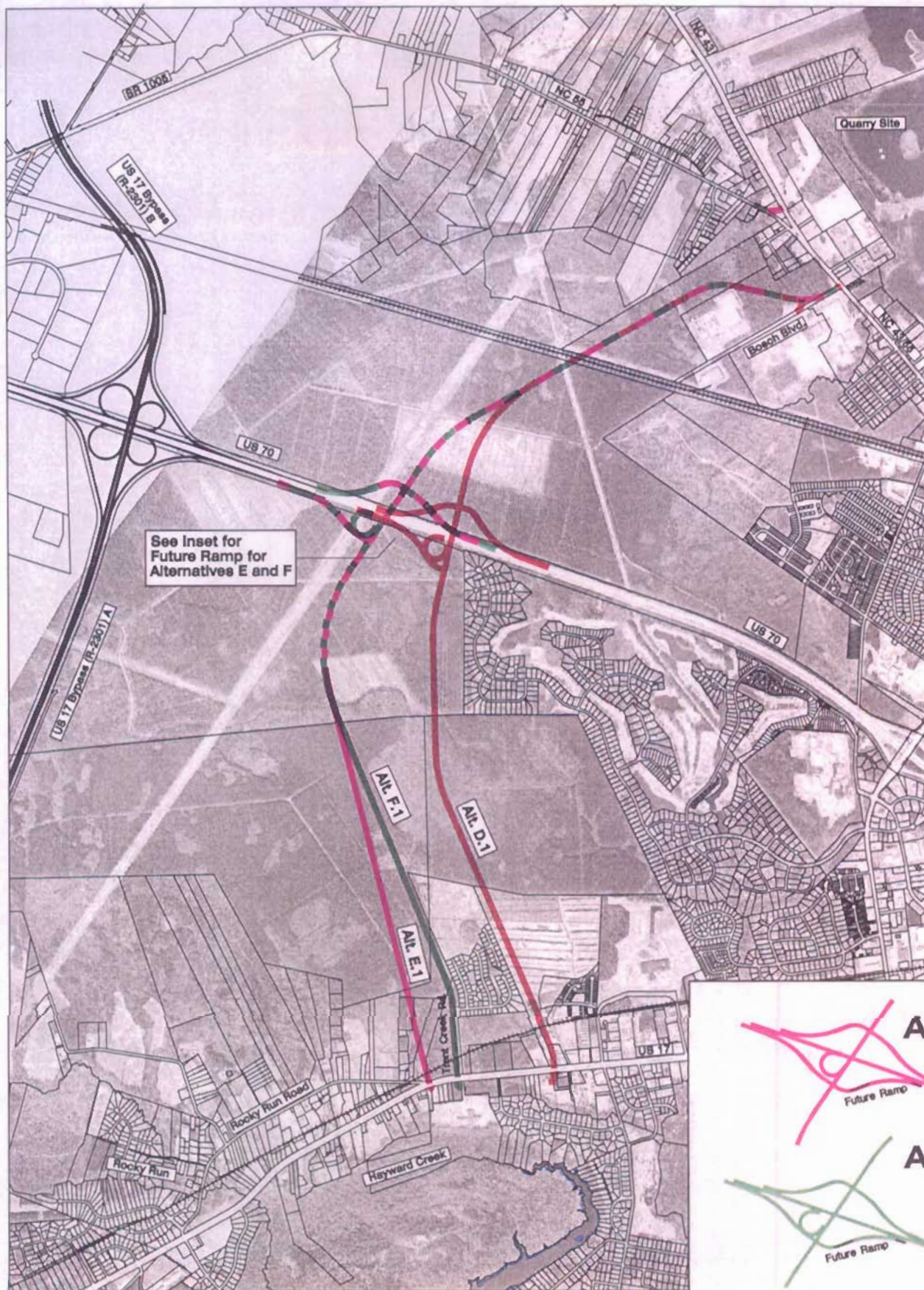
Project Study Area
 NTS
 Exhibit 1.2.2



NC 43 Connector

NC 55 to US 17 - TIP No. R-4463
Craven County, North Carolina

Build Alternatives
Alts. D, E, F
Scale: 1" = 3000'
Exhibit 2.5.2



NC 43 Connector

NC 55 to US 17 - TIP No. R-4463
Craven County, North Carolina

Build Alternatives
Alts. D.1, E.1, F.1
Scale: 1" = 3000'
Exhibit 2.5.3

